

Contributions of hypnobirthing to the woman's experience: Scoping Review

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Abstract

Introduction

A variety of strategies are currently offered to women for pain relief and comfort, supporting a positive childbirth experience.¹ These strategies are also recommended by the World Health Organization, with women's preferences always respected.² Hypnobirthing is one such strategy; however, it remains underused and not widely promoted, underscoring the importance of understanding its reported contributions to women's childbirth experience.

Objective

To map the available evidence on the reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience.

Methods

Scoping review conducted using the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) methodology.³ Searches were carried out in six databases: MEDLINE Ultimate, CINAHL Ultimate, MedicLatina, Web of Science, and the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (via the EBSCOhost platform), plus PubMed, to address the review question: "What are the reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience?" The Population–Concept–Context (PCC) framework defined Population as "women" and Concept as "hypnobirthing"; no context restrictions were applied. Eligible sources included primary studies with quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods designs, as well as secondary sources (systematic reviews), published in Portuguese, English, or Spanish. Extracted data were analyzed using content analysis and grouped into categories.

Results

A total of 604 records were identified. After removing 272 duplicates, 287 records were excluded during title and abstract screening, leaving 45 for full-text assessment. At the end of the process, 25 studies were included. Eight subcategories of reported contributions of hypnobirthing emerged: reduced pain, reduced fear, increased relaxation, shorter labor duration, a more positive childbirth experience, greater ability to regulate emotions, postpartum well-being, and active partner involvement. Reduced labor pain was the most frequently cited contribution associated with hypnobirthing.

Conclusion

This scoping review identified several reported contributions associated with hypnobirthing. Pain relief warrants particular attention; although it remains controversial and requires further studies providing higher-level evidence, it may serve as a valuable resource for labor pain management, potentially supporting a positive childbirth experience.

Keywords

Labor Pain; Hypnosis; Women; Childbirth.

Introduction

Pain during labor shapes how women perceive their childbirth experience. As medicine has advanced over the years, pharmacological pain relief techniques have been developed, making childbirth increasingly medicalized and institutionalized. However, nonpharmacological strategies for labor pain relief have increasingly been used and studied, with evidence supporting their effectiveness.¹ In this regard, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends relaxation, breathing techniques, music, among other approaches, for pain relief, while always taking women's preferences into account.²

A variety of these strategies are offered to women to enhance comfort and support a positive childbirth experience, including hypnobirthing. Hypnobirthing adapts hypnosis to pregnancy and childbirth.^{4,5} It uses relaxation, meditation, breathing techniques, positive affirmations, and hypnotherapy to help make childbirth as comfortable and pain-free as possible, reframing it away from the negative connotations it is often given.⁴ It also helps women follow their body's instincts, facilitating labor^{6,7}, and promoting a positive experience.

The WHO² states that a positive childbirth experience is a common goal for all women and defines it as an experience that meets or exceeds women's expectations, whether social, personal, or cultural; it also includes the birth of a healthy baby in a safe environment, with the woman accompanied by significant others and supported by skilled professionals able to assist her.

Hypnobirthing prepares women both physically and mentally for childbirth, so it is as pain free as possible and without fear.⁸ Fear can be detrimental to labor by increasing stress, inhibiting oxytocin release, and hindering labor progression. The mind is a key ally in this process and should therefore be engaged. Positive affirmations, that is, positive reinforcement, are highly effective and represent one of the pillars of hypnobirthing.⁴ Thus, using hypnosis during childbirth promotes relaxation, leading to dissociation from pain and shifts in perception, such as understanding contractions as bringing the baby closer rather than as intense, disabling pain.⁹

For hypnobirthing, women may be guided by a professional trained in the technique during labor, or they may learn the technique during pregnancy for later use during childbirth.⁹

To identify existing knowledge on this strategy and its contribution to women's childbirth experience, a preliminary search was conducted in the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews and JBI Evidence Synthesis, and no systematic reviews on the topic were identified in the past five years. Thus, the objective of this scoping review was to map the available evidence on the reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience.

Methods

This scoping review followed JBI methodology for scoping reviews.³ The review was conducted in accordance with a protocol developed a priori and registered on the Open Science Framework (<https://osf.io/sw3ue>). The Population–Concept–Context (PCC) framework guided the review question: “What are the reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience?” Population: women; Concept: hypnobirthing; Context: not restricted. The search strategy was carried out in two phases.

In the first phase, an initial limited search was conducted in MEDLINE Ultimate and CINAHL Ultimate via the EBSCOhost platform to identify papers on the topic. Titles and abstracts from the retrieved records were used to identify relevant text words and indexed terms related to hypnobirthing and its reported contributions to women's childbirth experience. Terms such as hypnobirthing, women, labor, and childbirth informed a comprehensive search strategy. In the second phase, the full search strategy using both text words and indexed terms—was adapted to the six databases selected for this review: MEDLINE Ultimate, CINAHL Ultimate, MedicLatina, Web of Science, and the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (via EBSCOhost), as well as PubMed, as shown in Table 1.

A grey literature search was also conducted. Regarding eligibility criteria, we included primary studies with qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods designs and secondary sources (literature reviews, including reviews

with metaanalysis or metasynthesis), published in Portuguese, English, or Spanish, with no time restrictions. The search was conducted on July 21, 2025.

Table 1 - Search strings by database

Database	Search string
CINAL Ultimate	(wom?n OR MM women) AND (hypno* OR hypnobirthing OR (MM "hypnosis")) AND (labor OR Childbirth OR delivery OR (MM "labor") OR (MM "childbirth") OR (MM "Delivery, Obstetric+"))
MEDLINE Ultimate	(women OR wom?n) AND (hypno* OR hypnobirthing OR (MM hypnosis)) AND (labor OR childbirth OR delivery OR (MM "labor, obstetric") OR (MM "parturition") OR (MM "Delivery, Obstetric+"))
MedicLatina	(Women) AND (hypnobirthing OR hypnosis) AND (labor OR childbirth OR delivery)
Web of Science	(Women) AND (hypnosis OR hypnobirthing) AND (labor OR childbirth OR delivery)
Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews	(women) AND (hypnobirthing OR hypnosis) AND (labor OR childbirth OR delivery)
PUBMED	(women) AND (hypnosis OR hypnobirthing) AND (labor OR childbirth OR delivery)

After retrieval, records were imported into Rayyan [®], and duplicates were removed. Two reviewers assessed records against the eligibility criteria and the review question; disagreements were resolved through discussion. Potentially relevant studies were retrieved in full text, and studies that did not meet the eligibility criteria were excluded.

Results

The database search yielded 604 records (MEDLINE: 208; CINAHL: 115; PubMed: 143; MedicLatina: 1; Web of Science: 125; Cochrane Database: 12). After removing 272 duplicates, 287 records were excluded during title and abstract screening, leaving 45 for full-text review and eligibility assessment. Eighteen records were excluded at this stage because they did not address hypnobirthing, did not answer the review question or objectives, or combined hypnobirthing with other techniques. In the end, 24 articles from the database searches and 1 grey literature source were included. The PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 1) shows the study selection process.

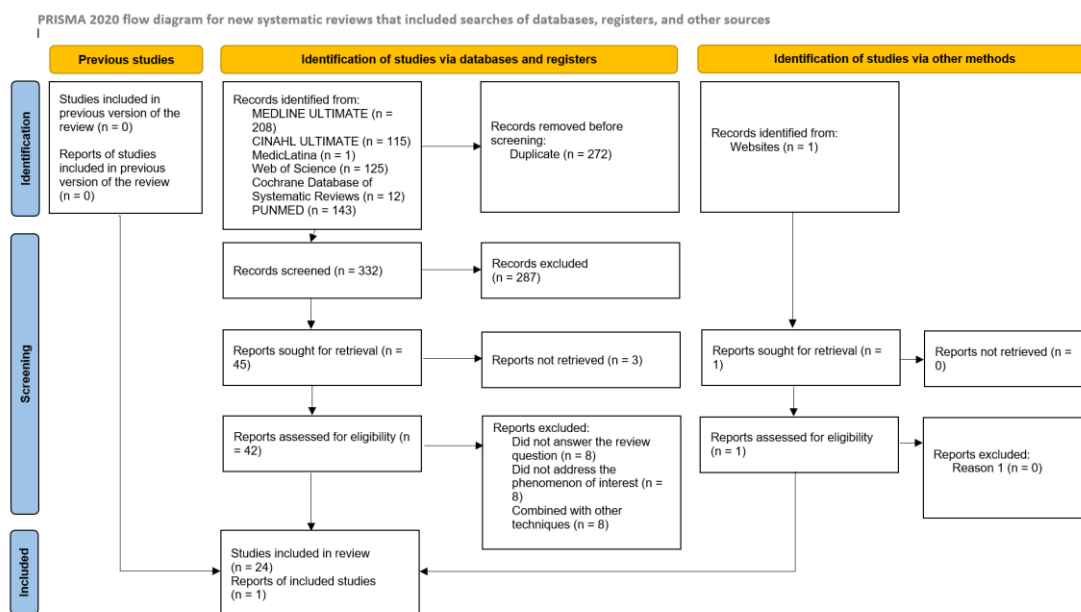


Figure 1 - PRISMA flow diagram.

Data extracted from the included studies were recorded in Table 1, which presents study characteristics (authors, year, title, country, method) and the main findings addressing the review question. The extracted data were then analyzed using content analysis and categorized.

Table 2 - Data extraction table.

A1.	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Atis & Rathfisch (2018)
Title	The effect of hypnobirthing training given in the antenatal period on birth pain and fear.
Study method	Experimental study—RCT
Country	Turkey
Participants	Pregnant women between 20 and 36 weeks of gestation who attended a hypnobirthing program for childbirth preparation
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's Childbirth experience	Reduced labor pain in 100% of the sample; Reduced fear of childbirth; Increased relaxation; Shorter second stage of labor.
A2.	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Azizmohammadi & Azizmohammadi (2019)
Title	Hypnotherapy in management of delivery pain: a review.
Study method	Literature review
Country	Iran
Participants	Women who used hypnosis as a method to reduce labor pain
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	Current evidence is insufficient to conclude that hypnosis reduces labor pain.
A3.	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Catsaros & Wendland (2020)
Title	Hypnosis-based interventions during pregnancy and childbirth and their impact on women's childbirth experience: A systematic review.
Study method	Systematic review
Country	France
Participants	Women who used hypnosis during pregnancy and childbirth
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	Improved women's childbirth experience through positive shifts in emotions and perceptions related to birth, described as a sense of pleasure and harmony; Reduced fear of childbirth; Reduced labor pain, with pain described as pressure only; Improved postpartum well-being; Empowered women, increasing confidence during childbirth and improving ability to regulate emotions.
A4.	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Büleç et al (2020)
Title	A Quasi-Experimental Study to Assess Hypnobirthing Educational Intervention on Labor Pain and Fear of Childbirth—The Case of Eskisehir/Turkey.
Study method	Quasi-experimental study
Country	Turkey
Participants	Pregnant women who attended a 6-week hypnobirthing program with 2.5-hour sessions per week
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	Reduced pain in 96% of the sample; 80% of the sample stated that the technique helped them relax.
A5.	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Uludag & Mete (2020)
Title	The effect of nursing care provided based on the philosophy of hypnobirthing on fear, pain, duration, satisfaction and cost of labor: a single-blind randomized controlled study: The effect of nursing care on the labor process and cost.
Study method	Randomized controlled trial (single-blind)
Country	Turkey
Participants	Pregnant women attending a hypnobirthing program
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	Reduced fear of childbirth and labor pain in the experimental group; Shorter second stage of labor; Greater satisfaction with labor.
A6.	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Catsaros & Wendland (2023)
Title	Psychological impact of hypnosis for pregnancy and childbirth: A systematic review.
Study method	Systematic review
Country	France
Participants	Pregnant women or women in labor who used hypnosis
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	Supported positive experiences through increased confidence, relaxation, and empowerment to adapt to the situation.
A7.	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Uldal et al. (2023)
Title	Women's experiences with hypnobirth - A qualitative study.
Study method	Qualitative study
Country	Norway

Participants	Women who used hypnobirthing
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	Staying focused during childbirth; Ability to manage pain; Understanding events during labor, promoting a positive experience regardless of whether it unfolded as planned; Active partner involvement during labor through strategies taught in the hypnobirthing program.
A8.	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Uludag & Mete (2023)
Title	Feelings and Experiences of Turkish Women Using Hypnobirthing in Childbirth: A Non-Traumatic Childbirth Experience.
Study method	Qualitative study
Country	Turkey
Participants	Women who used hypnobirthing during childbirth
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	Reduced fear of childbirth through breathing exercises
A9.	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Safitri et al. (2023)
Title	The Effect of Hypnobirthing Relaxation Method on Pain Intensity in Labor Women at Pratama Hadijah Clinic, Medan Perjuangan District Medan City.
Study method	Quasi-experimental study
Country	Indonesia
Participants	Women who participated in hypnobirthing training
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	Reduced pain intensity in the group that used the technique
A10.	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Paramasivam et al. (2023)
Title	Perspective of Primigravida Mother's Experience in Their Birthing Process Utilising HypnoBirthing.
Study method	Qualitative study
Country	Malaysia
Participants	Women who used hypnobirthing
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	Reduced pain, described as being transformed into discomfort; Partners' presence helped women use hypnobirthing, increasing self-confidence and sense of control; Greater confidence helped women better cope with childbirth.
A11	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Fernández-Gamero et al. (2024)
Title	Impact of Hypnotherapy on Fear, Pain, and the Birth Experience: A Systematic Review.
Study method	Systematic review
Country	Spain
Participants	Women who used hypnotherapy techniques for childbirth preparation
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	Reduced labor pain; Improved childbirth experience by helping women overcome previous trauma, with primiparous women rating the experience as positive.
A12.	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Phillips-Moore (2012)
Title	Birthing outcomes from an Australian HypnoBirthing programme.
Study method	Qualitative study
Country	Australia
Participants	Women who participated in a hypnobirthing program during pregnancy to prepare for childbirth
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	Reduced labor pain and discomfort during labor; Shorter labor: primiparous and multiparous women had shorter first and second stages of labor compared with the general population; Participants reported feeling calmer, more confident, and more relaxed.
A13.	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Buran & Aksu (2022)
Title	Effect of Hypnobirthing Training on Fear, Pain, Satisfaction Related to Birth, and Birth Outcomes: A Randomized Controlled Trial
Study method	Randomized controlled trial
Country	Turkey
Participants	Women who attended a hypnobirthing program during pregnancy to prepare for labor
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	A significant difference was found between the experimental and control groups, with reduced fear of childbirth in the experimental group; VAS pain scores differed significantly between groups across all phases of labor, with women in the experimental group reporting lower pain levels; Satisfaction with childbirth differed significantly between groups: 93.5% of women in the experimental group reported high satisfaction compared with 13% in the control group.

A14	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Kamalimanesh et al. (2025)
Title	Effect of self-hypnosis on fear and pain of natural childbirth: a randomized controlled trial
Study method	Randomized controlled trial
Country	Iran
Participants	Women who participated in a hypnosis program during pregnancy for use during labor
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	Reduced labor pain
A15	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Abbasi et al. (2009)
Title	The Effect of Hypnosis on Pain Relief During Labor and Childbirth in Iranian Pregnant Women
Study method	Quasi-experimental study
Country	Iran
Participants	Pregnant women who completed self-hypnosis sessions and guided meditation for use during labor
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	All women reported reduced labor pain, and four stated that the pain was transformed into pressure.
A16	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Lai et al. (2024)
Title	The effect of antenatal hypnosis training on pharmacological analgesia use during labour and birth: A systematic review and meta-analysis
Study method	Systematic review and meta-analysis
Country	Australia
Participants	Women who received hypnosis instruction as part of childbirth preparation
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	No difference was found in pharmacological analgesia use between women who received hypnosis-based preparation and those who prepared without hypnosis; therefore, no reduction in labor pain was observed.
A17	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	A. M. Cyna et al. (2006)
Title	Antenatal self-hypnosis for labour and childbirth: A pilot study
Study method	Quantitative observational descriptive-analytic study
Country	Australia
Participants	Pregnant women who learned self-hypnosis techniques as part of childbirth preparation
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	Primiparous women had a lower rate of pharmacological analgesia use, but further research was recommended.
A18	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	A. Cyna et al. (2013)
Title	Hypnosis antenatal training for childbirth: a randomised controlled trial
Study method	Randomized controlled trial
Country	Australia
Participants	Pregnant women over 34 weeks of gestation who attended three childbirth preparation sessions using hypnosis techniques
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	No differences were found between the experimental and control groups in labor pain reduction or analgesia use.
A19	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Finlayson et al. (2015)
Title	Unexpected consequences: women's experiences of a self-hypnosis intervention to help with pain relief during labour
Study method	Experimental study
Country	United Kingdom
Participants	Women who participated in an antenatal self-hypnosis training program
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	Positive experience; Empowerment; Greater calmness and confidence.
A20	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Werner, Ulbjerg, Zachariae, & Nohr (2013)
Title	Effect of self-hypnosis on duration of labor and maternal and neonatal outcomes: a randomized controlled trial.
Study method	Randomized controlled trial
Country	Denmark
Participants	Primiparous women who received antenatal preparation with self-hypnosis
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	No difference was found between groups in labor duration.

A21	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Werner, Uldbjerg, Zachariae, Wu, et al. (2013)
Title	Antenatal Hypnosis Training and Childbirth Experience: A Randomized Controlled Trial
Study method	Randomized controlled trial
Country	Denmark
Participants	Pregnant women who completed antenatal preparation with hypnosis techniques
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	Women who used hypnosis during labor reported a better childbirth experience.
A22	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Yaqoob et al. (2024)
Title	Hypnobirthing Training for First-Time Mothers: Pain, Anxiety and Postpartum Wellbeing
Study method	Experimental study
Country	Pakistan
Participants	Pregnant women at 33 weeks of gestation who received hypnobirthing-based childbirth preparation
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	Significant labor pain relief, with reduced anxiety and fear of childbirth; Lower risk of postpartum depression among postpartum women.
A23	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Beevi et al. (2017)
Title	The Effectiveness of Hypnosis Intervention for Labor: An Experimental Study
Study method	Quasi-experimental
Country	Malaysia
Participants	Pregnant women who attended a four-session hypnosis and self-hypnosis program
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	Differences between the experimental and control groups in second-stage labor duration were not significant, but women in the experimental group had a shorter second stage than those in the control group.
A24	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Madden et al. (2016b)
Title	Hypnosis for pain management during labour and childbirth
Study method	Literature review
Country	Australia
Participants	Pregnant women
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	No clear differences were found between women who used hypnosis and those who did not in satisfaction with pain relief.
A25	Details and characteristics of extracted articles
Authors and year	Çağınay (2021)
Title	Hypnosis: How effective is it in reducing perceptions of pain and fear of birth in pregnant women?
Study method	Quantitative study
Country	Turkey
Participants	Pregnant women between 24 and 36 weeks of gestation who received childbirth preparation using hypnosis.
Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	Significant reductions in both perceived labor pain and fear of childbirth

The included studies were published in international journals and were conducted in Spain (n = 1), Turkey (n = 6), Malaysia (n = 2), Iran (n = 3), France (n = 2), Norway (n = 1), Indonesia (n = 1), Denmark (n = 2), Australia (n = 5), the United Kingdom (n = 1), and Pakistan (n = 1). Primary studies accounted for 76% of the sample (qualitative, quantitative, quasi-experimental, and experimental designs), whereas secondary studies (e.g., literature reviews) represented 24%. Content analysis of the 25 studies included in this review identified eight subcategories under the category “Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women’s childbirth experience,” as shown in Table 2, which also lists the studies that reported each contribution.

Table 2 - Summary of results.

Reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience	
Study/article	Contribution subcategories
A1, A3, A4, A5, A9, A10, A11, A12, A13, 14, A15, A22, A24	Reduced labor pain
A1, A3, A5, A13	Reduced fear of childbirth
A1, A4, A8	Increased relaxation
A1, A5, A12, A23	Shorter labor duration
A3, A6, A7, A11, A13, A19, A21	A more positive childbirth experience
A3; A22	Greater postpartum well-being
A3, A10, A12, A19	Greater confidence and improved ability to regulate emotions
A10	Active partner involvement

Hypnobirthing's contribution to labor pain management and relief was noted in 56% of the studies (N = 14).^{8,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,22} Approximately 28% of the studies (N = 7) cited effects of this nonpharmacologic strategy on reducing fear of childbirth^{8,11,12,14,21,22} and increasing relaxation.^{11,13,18,23} A shorter labor duration associated with hypnobirthing was present in 16% of the studies (N = 4).^{12,17,23,25-27} Several studies (N = 6; F= 24%) observed that the strategy supported a more positive childbirth experience.^{12,16,18,25} It was also reported to support greater postpartum well-being (N = 2; F = 8%)^{12,21} and improved emotional regulation (N = 4; F= 16%).^{12,16,18,25} Only one study (4%) identified active partner involvement as a contribution associated with hypnobirthing.¹⁶

Discussion

The use of nonpharmacologic strategies for labor pain relief as a contribution to women's positive childbirth experience has increasingly drawn interest from professionals in the field.¹ Hypnobirthing, the technique examined in this review, also showed contributions to women's childbirth experience.

Reduced labor pain among women who used hypnobirthing was the most frequently reported contribution. This finding appears in the experimental studies^{8,11,14,19} and the quasi-experimental studies^{13,15,20} included in the review. In this regard, Atis and Rathfish¹¹ described that reduced pain was identified as a positive effect by the entire sample, and Bulez et al.¹³ concluded that 96% of the sample stated hypnobirthing was completely effective in relieving labor pain. Similar findings were identified by Safitri et al.¹⁵, Uludag & Mete¹⁴, and Buran & Aksu⁸: groups who used hypnobirthing observed reduced pain and better pain management than groups who did not. Other studies also identified reduced pain associated with hypnobirthing, but described it as pain being transformed into discomfort or pressure only.^{12,16,20} The qualitative studies^{18,22} align with these findings, showing that women who used hypnobirthing described reduced pain. However, the literature review by Fernández-Gamero et al.¹⁷ concluded that pain relief associated with hypnobirthing remains controversial.

Classifying the childbirth experience as better or more positive was another commonly cited contribution of hypnobirthing. Catsaros and Wendland¹² described that women who used hypnobirthing reported a better childbirth experience due to positive shifts in emotions and perceptions related to the moment of their baby's birth, alongside feelings of pleasure and harmony, with reduced anxiety and increased satisfaction. Werner et al.²⁹ found similar results; in that study, a better childbirth experience was linked to pain and fear management and greater confidence, as these parameters are part of the instrument used to assess childbirth experience. Uldal et al.²⁸ also found that women rated their experience as more positive, achieved through the sense of safety and confidence developed from the knowledge they gained about childbirth through hypnobirthing. In addition, these women described a shift in how they viewed childbirth, resulting in a better experience and greater focus on the emotional aspects of childbirth rather than labor outcomes. These elements, addressed through hypnobirthing techniques, were associated with an improved childbirth experience. In the study by Finlayson et al.²⁵, women reported a positive experience, as did Catsaros and Wendland²⁷; however, they indicated that, for childbirth to be classified as positive, beyond the confidence and empowerment gained through hypnobirthing, the relaxation the strategy provides is also important. Some multiparous women who used hypnobirthing described a better childbirth experience because it helped them work through trauma from previous births. By contrast, nulliparous women described the experience as positive with hypnobirthing but had no previous births for comparison¹⁷, raising the question of whether rating the experience as better or positive is influenced by having prior birth experiences. This issue may be less consequential, as Buran and Aksu⁸ found a statistically significant difference in satisfaction with childbirth: 93.5% of women in the experimental group (who used hypnobirthing) indicated high satisfaction, whereas only 13% of women in the control group cited a similar experience. Thus, hypnobirthing's contributions appear to extend beyond

childbirth itself, supporting continued postpartum well-being, with reduced depression²¹ and increased self-confidence.¹²

Reducing fear of childbirth is another contribution identified by women who used hypnobirthing. This fear is often linked to concern about experiencing pain or uncertainty about what will happen during labor. In this regard, Grave⁴ notes that hypnobirthing empowers women by providing knowledge about uterine function, muscle fibers, and the physiological mechanisms of childbirth helping prevent uncertainty from triggering fear and, in turn, stress and emphasizes that the mind and what it holds can influence labor. Some experimental studies^{11,14,21} found lower levels of fear among women who received hypnobirthing. In addition, Finlayson et al.²⁵ observed that women described empowerment as an outcome of the strategy, culminating in greater calmness and confidence. Catsaros & Wendland¹² observed similar findings, describing reduced childbirth related fear because women remained calm in situations that would otherwise provoke fear. This contribution appears consistent across the evidence base, as Çağanay²² also found a significant reduction in fear of childbirth.

Relaxation, strongly emphasized and taught in hypnobirthing, can be achieved through breathing exercises learned and then practiced.²³ Partners also cited this contribution.¹¹ In the study by Phillips-Moore¹⁸, women expressed that the technique helped them feel more relaxed.

Relaxation was cited by 100% of the sample in Atis & Rathfisch¹¹ and by 80% in Bulez et al.¹³. These findings highlight hypnobirthing's contribution to helping women experience labor with less stress and stay focused on emotional regulation.

Emotional regulation also emerged as a contribution associated with hypnobirthing, closely tied to greater confidence. Catsaros & Wendland¹² and Finlayson et al.²⁵ described empowerment gained through hypnobirthing training as supporting a stronger sense of control and confidence during childbirth¹⁸. Paramasivam et al.¹⁶ similarly stated that the strategy helped women feel more confident and better able to regulate their emotions. Active partner involvement was identified only by Paramasivam et al.¹⁶. It was described as the partner's support in applying the technique such as guiding breathing and relaxation exercises which strengthened confidence and, in turn, supported emotional regulation.

Findings on labor duration were mixed, and not all studies pointed to a shorter second stage of labor. Atis & Rathfisch¹¹ concluded that the second stage was shorter in women who received the hypnobirthing intervention than in the control group, with a statistically significant between-group difference of 10 minutes. Uludag & Mete¹⁴ also found a significant between-group difference, with a shorter second stage in the intervention group. Beevi et al.²⁴ did not observe a statistically significant difference but still reported a between-group difference in second-stage duration. Phillips-Moore¹⁸ described shorter labor among both primiparous and multiparous women, with shorter first- and second-stage duration compared with the general population. In contrast, Werner, Ulbjerg, Zachariae & Nohr²⁹ found no between-group differences in labor duration; however, their sample included only nulliparous women, which may help explain this finding.

Conclusion

This scoping review mapped and described multiple reported contributions of hypnobirthing to women's childbirth experience. Although pain relief associated with hypnobirthing remains controversial and more robust evidence is needed, it was the most frequently cited contribution across the studies included in this scoping review. Therefore, hypnobirthing may be a valuable resource for managing labor pain. Women who used this strategy also described increased relaxation, reduced fear of childbirth, and greater confidence, supporting emotional regulation and a more positive childbirth experience. A shorter labor duration was also noted. In addition, active partner involvement and postpartum well-being were cited as contributions. These findings support a deeper understanding of hypnobirthing and recognition of its potential benefits for women's childbirth experience. However, health professionals should have in-depth knowledge of the techniques that comprise this strategy and should facilitate and promote their appropriate use so women can have a positive childbirth experience.

Study limitations

This scoping review has some limitations. Despite developing a priori protocol and conducting an extensive search, relevant studies may have been missed because of language restrictions. In addition, the inability to access full-text articles for some studies may have led to the exclusion of potentially relevant articles.

Authorship and Contributions

HR: Study conception and design; Data collection; Data analysis and interpretation; Manuscript writing; Approval of the final version of the manuscript and assumption of responsibility for it.

MJF: Study conception and design; Data analysis and interpretation; Critical review of the manuscript; Approval of the final version of the manuscript and assumption of responsibility for it.

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Non-applicable data sharing.

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